

This is an inseparable problem, and we better get it now or we will never get Afghanistan back.

THE PROBLEM

Counter-narcotics efforts in Afghanistan are failing. A recent report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) indicated that opium cultivation rose 59% in the past year. . . . from 104,000 to 165,000 hectares.

Afghanistan is producing 92% of the world's opiates including heroin and this total actually exceeds global consumption by an astounding 30%.

The problem is particularly acute in the southern provinces and most notably in Helmand. If one considered Helmand an independent nation, it would be the world's second largest opium producer following the rest of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's central government has been unable to exert enough influence to stem the rising opium tide and this has fueled rampant corruption at the provincial level.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

This rise in opium production coincides with a resurgence of Taliban inspired violence especially prevalent in Afghanistan's southern provinces. The drug profits, totaling at least a third of Afghanistan's GDP, are fueling a deadly insurgency that has reached unprecedented levels since we toppled the Taliban regime in 2001. American and allied soldiers are fighting and dying every day because of this illicit relationship.

In a larger sense, the Taliban's resurrection is threatening Afghanistan's emerging democracy and restricting the growth of legitimate trade and commerce. It's no coincidence that the largest increases in opium production occurred in the areas where the central government is weak and the Taliban is strong.

At the provincial level, there is widespread corruption between government officials, narco-traffickers, tribal leaders and Taliban insurgents. The Taliban is encouraging farmers to grow poppy while providing protection for narcotics shipments through Afghanistan. This symbiotic relationship is destroying the fabric of Afghan democracy and threatening to reverse all of the nation's progress since 2001.

Afghanistan's drug based economy is destabilizing the entire region and providing the financial means for a return of radical Islamic fundamentalism to this fledgling democracy.

THE WAY FORWARD

The Department of Defense (DOD) and other federal agencies need to accept that narcotics smuggling in Afghanistan is fueling the Taliban-led insurgency. Defeating the Taliban is impossible without simultaneously addressing the drug problem so the DOD must play a greater role in non-eradication efforts.

On September 7th, the Schumer amendment was inserted into the DOD appropriations bill for \$700 million towards the drug problem in Afghanistan. At conference, I recommend mandating this funding to jump-start a new, counter-narcotics policy in Afghanistan.

Since narcotics and terrorist operatives function in a mutually beneficial and symbiotic fashion, our national policy must shift toward a "Unified Campaign" against drugs and terror similar to the initiative in Colombia which has yielded significant results. Our national policy should not focus solely on eradication. In-

stead, the DOD must be mandated to support other federal/international agencies in pursuit of narcotics traffickers as well as terrorist organizations. More specifically:

Purchase or lease adequate DEA helicopter lift and support gun ships to support enforcement actions against drug kingpins (also known as High Valued Targets or HVTs) or heroin labs.

Utilize the State Department's ten Huey II helicopters, currently being used for eradication, to support DEA law enforcement operations.

Purchase an adequate number of counter-narcotic canines to support all drug enforcement operations including airport security/cargo inspection and road check-points.

Provide \$18.5 million for the DEA to create human-intelligence networks.

The successful counter-narcotics lessons from Colombia are also clear. Upon the U.S. Congress' request, the Colombian National Police visited Afghanistan in July 2006 and made several recommendations to curb the narcotics problem. The Colombian police are experts at dealing with the terrorism and drug nexus so we should give great weight to their recommendations. They encouraged the Afghan police to develop their investigative and intelligence collection techniques to exploit human informants in order to take-down drug kingpins as well as to trace and eliminate the trafficking networks. In addition, the Afghan police needs to learn how to develop legal cases in order prosecute major drug kingpins.

A key mechanism of the DOD's efforts is the use of the Central Transfer Account (CTA). This account was developed to preserve the integrity of the Department's counter-narcotics efforts and should remain firewalled from other uses. A recent reorganization proposal within DOD to expand the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (DASD) for Counter-Narcotics responsibilities to also include counter-proliferation and other unspecified "global threats", derails the singular focus of the CTA. If the CTA's resources are combined with other responsibilities, such as the Nunn-Lugar program which focuses on dismantling Soviet-era nuclear warheads, the DOD's counter-narcotics mission would be seriously distracted if not compromised. Counter-proliferation and counter-narcotics are distinct activities and the DOD should not combine both functions under one office.

Finally, provincial corruption is the lubrication which keeps the narcotics engine running in Afghanistan. The potential profits from narcotics trafficking are a compelling temptation to many officials in this poverty stricken nation. Unless the Afghanistan government, with the support of the international community, can root out corruption at all levels and successfully prosecute those who violate their own laws, we'll struggle to gain any ground.

CONCLUSION

Narcotics smuggling is feeding the terrorist insurgency in Afghanistan. The two activities are inextricably linked and must be combated in a unified fashion.

We must succeed in Afghanistan. The maintenance of a stable and democratic Afghanistan is pivotal for regional and global security.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr.

McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. McDERMOTT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. EMANUEL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GILCHREST addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TRIBUTE TO FRANK WALKER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Resources Subcommittee of National Parks, I have had the privilege to visit many of our Nation's National Parks. From my own personal experiences, I have come to love the beauty of these parks and am grateful for the recreational opportunities they have to offer. Over 100 years ago, our predecessors displayed historic vision and took a bold step forward in a quest for protecting our Nation's natural wonders.

On March 1, 1872, Congress established the Yellowstone National Park, our Nation's first and still one of our most beautiful and pristine national parks. President Theodore Roosevelt strengthened our Nation's conservation system through the Antiquities Act of 1906, creating 18 national monuments by the end of his presidency, including the beautiful cliffs of Mesa Verde National Park in southwestern Colorado, Arizona's Petrified Forest, and our own natural wonder, the Grand Canyon. These monuments laid the groundwork for our current park system, a vision completed in 1916 as President Woodrow Wilson established the National Park Service.

There are thousands of individuals in the National Park Service as well as volunteers like Friends of our Parks, who dedicate their talent and lives to our National Parks. Without all of their hard work and dedication, our National Parks could not retain their immaculate beauty, nor could they continue to provide critical habitat for our nation's world-renowned wildlife. It is because of the work of these individuals that I, as well as my children and my grandchildren, will be able to enjoy the Park System. Today, there are 390 National Parks throughout America, with at least one in nearly